

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00

INT-08 SCEM-02 SCI-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-20 DPW-01

DRC-01 /160 W

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O R 031155Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9551

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 20308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, EGEN: VS

SUBJ: CIVILIAN POL SITUATION

1. THIS MESSAGE GIVES PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE EFFECTS OF NHA BE FIRE ON CIVILIAN POL SUPPLY SITUATION AND ON ACTIONS IN RESPONSE THERETO.

2. EARLY THIS MORNING (DEC 3) MILITARY GOVERNOR OF SAIGON-GIA DINH ORDERED ALL SAIGON AREA GAS STATIONS CLOSED FOR INVENTORY AND APPRAISAL OF SITUATION. MINISTER TRADE AND INDUSTRY CUONG HAS ORDERED SIMILAR CLOSING IN CAN THO AND OTHER AREAS SERVED OUT OF NHA BE.

3. FURING COURSE OF THE MORNING, CUONG, WILL SHELL REPRESENTATIVE AND USAID OFFICIALS, MADE HELICOPTER SURVEY OF NHA BE AND DISCUSSED CIVIL SUPPLY SITUATION. CUONG THEN MET WITH REPS OF ALL THREE OIL COMPANIES, WITH SAIGON POWER COMPANY, AND WAS TO REPORT LATER TO CABINET MEETING. RESULTS OF THIS MEETING NOT YET AVAILABLE.

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4. SUPPLY FOR SAIGON ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE

IMMEDIATELY CRITICAL PROBLEM. COMPANY REPORTS 26-DAY SUPPLY ON HAND IN OWN TANKS, AND BELIEVES THIS COULD BE STRETCHED TO WELL OVER ONE MONTH WITHOUT SERIOUS DISRUPTION. COMPANY ALSO BELIEVES AN ADDITIONAL 10-DAY SUPPLY MAY BE SALVAGEABLE FROM SHELL TANKS AT NHA BE

5. WITH RESPECT TO VEHICLE FUELS, SUPPLY SITUATION STILL UNCLEAR. PRELIMINARY VIEW OF MTI IS THAT GAS STATIONS MUST BE OPENED WITHIN NEXT DAY OR SO FOR SALES OF DIESEL FUEL FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLES. STATIONS WOULD BE PROHIBITED FROM ALL SALES OF GASOLINE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS RATIONING SCHEME CAN BE DEvised.

6. KEROSENE FOR COOKING WILL BE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT COMMODITY TO HANDLED. PROBABLY LIMITED SUPPLIES WILL BE ALLOCATED TO DEALERS WITHIN A DAY OR SO.

7. SHELL REP TOLD US HE WILL ASK OTHER COMPANIES TO POOL STORAGE FACILITIES, AND WE ASSUME THAT POOLING ARRANGEMENTS WILL ALSO COVER KEY INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS.

8. SHELL HAS ORDERED TANKERS EN ROUTE FROM SINGAPORE TO DEALY ARRIVAL HERE UNTIL STORAGE ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE.

9. TOTAL THROUGH-PUT CAPACITY AT NHA BE TERMINAL APPEARS TO BE REDUCED BY APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT. HOWEVER, WILL HAVE MORE ACCURATE ESTIMATE WHEN FIRE UNDER CONTROL AND DAMAGE ASSESSED.

10. ON VERY LOW KEY, WE ARE ASSESSING AVAILABILITY LARGE POL PARGES TO ESTABLISH FLOATING TANK FARM, PRINCIPALLY FOR FUEL OIL AND DIESEL, TO IMPROVE SITUATION. ALSO INVESTIGATING FEASIBILITY USING OLD U.S. MILITARY TANK FARM AT CAM RANH BAY AS A FALL-BACK IN EVENT OTHER NHA BE FACILITIES ARE DAMAGED OR FLOATING STORAGE PROVES UNFEASIBLE.

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